

A RARE AND UNUSUAL TRACT RELATING TO  
THE SLAVE TRADE TO AMERICA IN 1667 G 1667

ANSWER (AN) of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading into Africa, to the Petition and Paper of certain Heads and Particulars thereunto relating and annexed, exhibited to the Honourable House of Commons by Sir Paul Painter, Ferdinando Gorges, Henry Batson, Benjamin Skutt, and Thomas Knights, on the behalf of Themselves and Others concerned in His Majesties Plantations in America. 4to, half brown morocco; small stain on the last leaf. [London] Anno Dom. 1667

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The petitioners objected that before the formation of the Company, when trade in Guinea Coast Negroes was free to all, the English plantations had been plentifully supplied with the slaves necessary to their prosperity, but that now the Company of Royal Adventurers had contracted to supply the Spanish plantations as well as the English, and as a consequence "His Majesties Plantations in America are at present much decayed".

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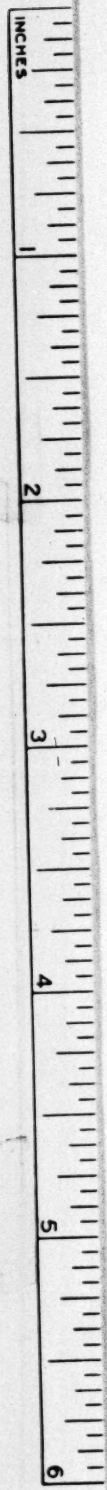
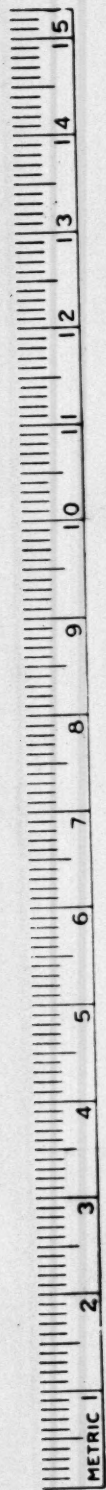


**ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY. AN ANSWER OF THE COMPANY OF ROYAL ADVENTURERS OF ENGLAND TRADING INTO AFRICA, TO THE PETITION AND PAPER OF CERTAIN FREE TRADERS AND PARTICULARS THEREUNTO RELATING AND ANNEXED, EXHIBITED TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY SIR PAUL PAINTER, FERDINANDO GORGES, HENRY BATSON, BENJAMIN SKUTT, AND THOMAS KNIGHTS, on the behalf of themselves and Others CONCERNED IN HIS MAJESTIES PLANTATIONS IN AMERICA.** [London], Anno Dom. 1667. *Fine large copy, polished levant morocco extra.* Sm. 4° £75 (637)

\*.\* This extremely rare privately printed piece, a copy of which we have not previously met with, records the action taken by the Free Traders to break down the monopoly in the trade for Negroes set up by the newly founded Royal African Company. It commences with the Petition to Parliament of Sir Ferdinando Gorges and his Associates setting forth how the prosperity of the American Plantations depended almost entirely upon a plentiful supply of Negro labour, and how the demand had, in the past, been plentifully met by the Free Traders to the advantage and profit of the Plantations, the Crown, and the Nation generally. That the newly erected Company of Adventurers trading to Africa had claimed to themselves the sole and only right to trade for Negroes, and had obstructed all other traders, and had contracted with Foreigners for the supply of the Spanish Plantations, thus leaving the English Plantations in America badly supplied at excessive prices, or not supplied at all, by reason of which all the latter were much decayed and in danger of inevitable destruction. And praying Parliament to apply such remedy as might be fittest. Then follows the "Paper of certain Heads and Particulars" mentioned on the title, with the Reply of the Royal African Company thereto; also an Account of divers obstructions to the Free Trade, and the Answers given by the Company to their complaints.

Evidently the Petition and any action taken against it by the Royal African Company had small result in settling the dispute, for we find that, in 1674, the King (Charles II.) issued a Proclamation announcing that having granted the entire trade into and from Africa to the Royal African Company, and being informed that divers subjects not members of the Company had endeavoured to reap the fruits thereof, he thought it fit to declare his Will and Pleasure in strictly prohibiting all and every Subject excepting the Royal African Company, to exercise any trade to any part of the Coasts of Africa, or to carry any Negroes to any of his American Dominions.

The only copy of the above important tract we know of in America is the example in the John Carter Brown Library.



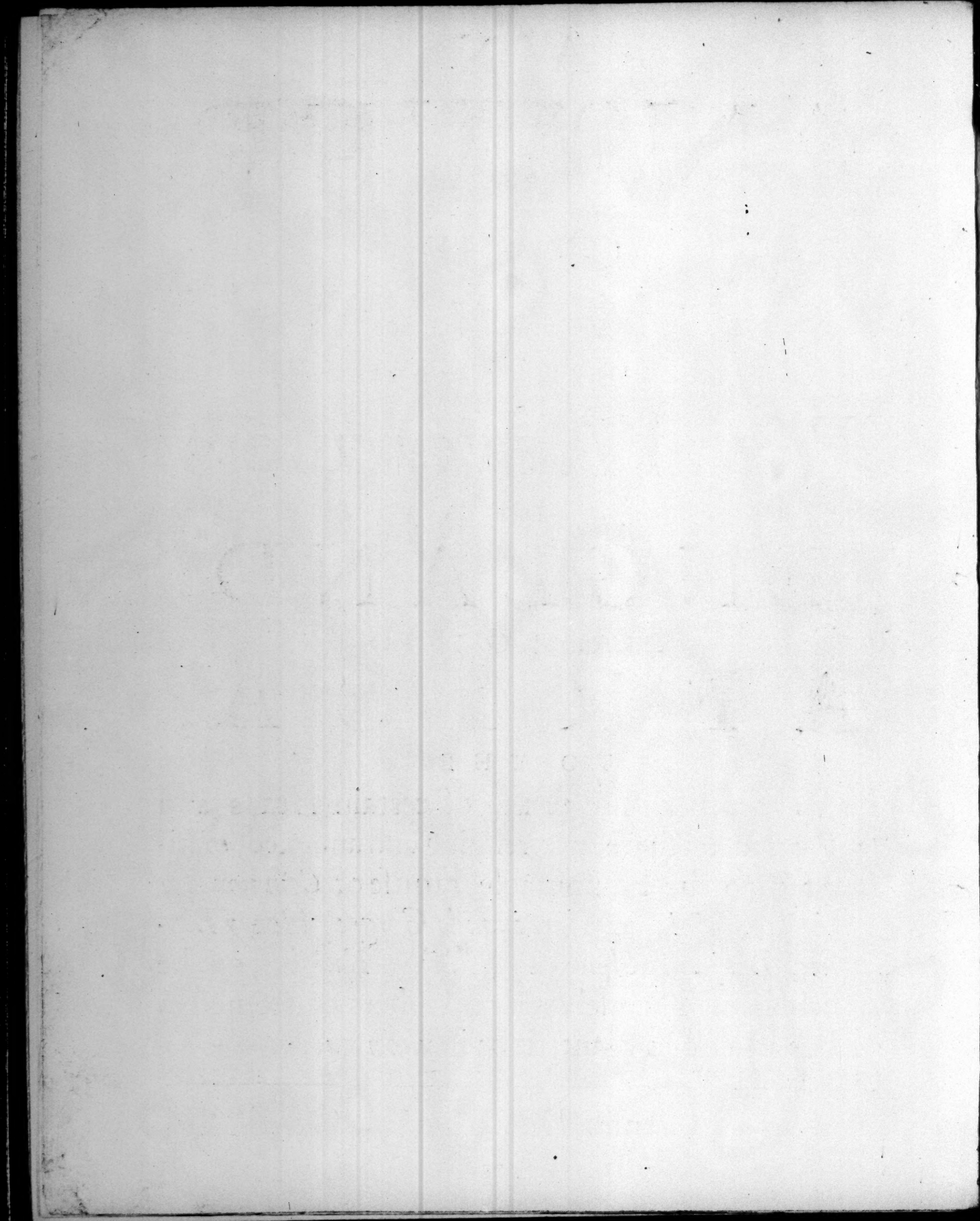


A N  
ANSWER  
OF THE  
C O M P A N Y  
OF  
Royal Adventurers  
OF  
ENGLAND  
TRADING INTO  
A F R I C A,  
TO THE

PETITION and PAPER of certain Heads and Particulars thereunto relating and annexed, exhibited to the Honourable House of Commons by Sir Paul Painter, Ferdinando Gorges, Henry Batson, Benjamin Skutt, and Thomas Knights, on the behalf of Themselves and Others concerned in His Majesties Plantations in *America*.

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Anno Dom. 1667.







To the Right Honourable the Knights, Citizens, and Burgeſſes Aſſembled in  
PARLIAMENT.

*The Humble Petition of Sir Paul Painter Knight, Ferdinando Gorges, Henry Batſon, Gentlemen, and Benjamin Skutt and Thomas Knights Merchants, in behalf of themſelves and others concerned in His Majesties Plantations in America.*

HUMBLT SHEWETH,

**T**Hat His Majesties Plantations (having been the moſt conſiderable Trade of this Nation) were at firſt raiſed, and have been brought to the perfection that they now are at, and now do, and did alwaies in it principally ſubſiſt by the labour of Negro Servants, and a plentiful ſupply of them.

That formerly there hath alwaies been a freedom of Trade for all His Majesties Subjects for Negroes on the whole coaſt of *Guiney*, by reaſon whereof the ſaid Plantations have been plentifully ſupplied with Negroes of the beſt ſort, and at an indifferent rate, to the great encrease of the ſaid Plantations, and the advantage and profit of this Crown and Nation.

That there is of late a new erected Company of *Adventurers* Trading into *Africa*, who claiming to themſelves the

sole and only Trade for *Negroes* on the coast of *Guiney*, have totally obstructed the former free Trade of all Adventurers thither ; and having contracted with Forreiners for the supply of the *Spanish* Plantations with *Negroes*, do leave the *English* Plantations in *America*, which produce the same Commodities with the *Spanish*, either ill supplied, and at excessive prices, or not at all supplied ; by reason whereof, and of the obstruction of the freedom of Trade for *Negroes* as aforesaid, all His Majesties Plantations in *America* are at present much decayed, and unless a timely remedy be provided, will speedily be brought to inevitable destruction.

*Your Petitioners do therefore most humbly pray Your Honours, upon consideration of the Premises, and of the Paper hereunto annexed, to provide such remedy therein as to Your Grace Wisdoms shall seem fittest,*

And Your Petitioners, as in duty bound,  
shall ever pray, &c.

*Paul Painter.      Ferdinando Gorges.  
Henry Batson.    Benjamin Skutt,  
Thomas Knights.*

*Die*



*Die Veneris, 15 Nov. 1667.*

**A** Petition of Sir *Paul Painter* Knight, *Ferdinando Gorges* Gent. and others, on the behalf of themselves and others, concerning His Majesties Plantations in *America*, and the Paper of certain Heads and Particulars relating thereto, and annexed to the Petition, were read.

Resolved, &c.

**T**hat the said Petition and Paper annexed be committed to the Committee of the whole House appointed to take into consideration the general Ballance of Trades ; And that the Clerk of this House do deliver Copies thereof to such persons as shall desire the same on the behalf of the Royal Company, or other persons concerned, who are to deliver in their Answer thereto in writing by this day seven-night ; and that the Royal Company do then cause their Charter to be brought in.

WILL. GOLDESBROUGH,

*Cler. Dom. Com.*

*The*

*The Paper of certain Heads and Particulars annexed, and relating  
to the aforementioned Petition.*

**T**HE great and high Advantages which have formerly accrued unto his Majesty and his Subjects, by his Majesties Colonies in *America*, may much appear in these Particulars.

1. The said Colonies have yearly imployed above Four Hundred Sayle of Ships, most of them considerable both of burthen and force, to the great encouragement of Navigation, and increase of Sea-men, which have been ever reputed as the mayne Bulwark and Defence of this Nation.

2. The said Ships for the most part were fraughted out with Manufactures of *England*, (*viz.*) Shooes, Stockings, Serges, Broad-cloaths, Carseys, Hatts, all sorts of Wrought Iron; with great store of Provisions, as Beef, Butter, Flower, Pease, &c. which gave Employment and Bread to many Thousands of Families here, and put a Value upon the Commodities of our own Growth and Manufacture; which otherwise would have soon abated in their price, and been of little worth.

3. The said Ships in return of the said Goods and Manufactures came laden home with Sugars, Cotton, Ginger, Indigo, Tobacco, &c. all which were produced by the Industry of the laborious Planter, with the help and former constant supply of *Negroes* brought to them from the Coast of *Guinea*, &c. without which the said Colonies must inevitably be reduced to ruine and destruction.

4. The Manufactory of this Nation exported, as also the Sugars, &c. imported, brought in a great Revenue unto his Majesties Customes; which was not onely very considerable in its self, in respect of other vast Advantages which accrued thereby unto his Majesty and Subjects in general, (*viz.*) The most part of the said Sugars, &c. were from hence shipt out again and exported into Foreign Countries, and by that means returned back unto us large summes of Money or Commodities equivalent, for that upon the great Wheel of Trade of good and Staple Commodities are little inferior to, or less affected than ready Bullion.



*The Answer of the Royal Company to the Paper of certain Heads and Particulars annexed and relating to the afore-mentioned Petition.*

**T**He said Company do acknowledge, That his Majesties Plantations are considerable for the Trade of this Nation, and so were, before the Establishment of this Company: But they say, That the said Plantations were never so well supplied during the pretended freedom of Trade for *Blacks*, as they have been by this Company, since they were established, nor his Majesties Revenue by Customs larger, nor the Trade for those parts ever more fully supplied with all sorts of Merchandises and Provisions.

And

*An Account of divers Obstructions to the beforementioned Advantages, occasioned by the late erected Company of Adventurers trading into Africa, who have solely ingrossed the Guiney Trade for Negroes; which must inevitably ruine His Majesties said Colonies in America, unless timely prevented.*

1. **T**HE said *Guiny Trade* for *Negroes* was formerly Free to all Adventurers, and that without prejudice to the *Gold Trade* there, which was heretofore mannaged by the *East India Company*, for that the same cannot be well maintained without a great and general Charge, as the building of Forts, settling continued Factories, &c. which the Trade for *Negroes* in no wise requires, It being the most usual way for the said Adventurers to procure their *Negroes* by Ranging or Coasting it along those vast Territories, without intrenching upon, or assistance from the said Factories and Forts. By which freedom of the said Adventurers Trade the Planters were heretofore plentifully supplied with *Negroes* upon reasonable tearms, without which they cannot subsist; And likewise had of course considerable Credit with the said Adventurers, whereby the said Colonies have attained unto their late perfection, without any cost or charge to this Kingdom; And unless such freedom be continued, the Plantations already compleated will soon decay, and those that are in their Infancy never advance.

2. The



And as to the Obstructions which they object this Company have given to that Trade, They hope this Honourable House will by the Answers hereunder written receive satisfaction, and judge that the Petitioners Complaints are altogether causeless.

In Answer to their first Article, the said Company say,  
**T**He whole Trade of *Guinea*, *Binny*, and *Angola*, was incorporated many years since by a Patent, as now it is; and those Patentees purchased Lands of the Natives, and for their necessary security erected several Forts, Garrisons, and Factories, on the Gold Coast, and other places; who after they applied themselves principally to the Trade of Gold, did in few years lose the greatest part of their Stock; and the reason was, because the profit of that Trade would not defray their charge of maintaining Forts and Factories, and the hire of Ships, which brought home nothing but a Pot of Gold to defray their freight, there being at that time very little or no Trade for *Blacks* to the Plantations. About ten or twelve years since they licensed Ships at 10 per Cent. on the *Cargoes*: And then, the exporting of Gold out of *England* being prohibited, and the Trade of *India* being principally carried on with ready money, the *East-India* Company for their conveniency hired the Castles, Forts, and Trade of the Gold-Coast, of the said former Company, which did turn to account to them, in regard their Ships outward bound to *India* touched there without any considerable charge, landed their Goods, and carried away the Gold to *India*: But since this Company was erected, they having settled several more considerable Forts and Factories, and been at charge to maintain them, they have found, That the Trade of the Gold-Coast cannot possibly be maintained without the *Negro* Trade: And notwithstanding what the Petitioners say to the contrary, That very *Negro* Trade cannot be carried on so well as by going first to the Gold-Coast, and taking thence some of those *Negroes* for Guardians to the Leeward Coast *Negroes*.

And should not this Trade for *Negroes* be carried on by a Company, as the Petitioners confess the Gold-Coast Trade ought to be, the Traders would be subject to the Injuries, Affronts, and Losses as formerly, of which the private Traders a little before the beginning of the late *Dutch* War complained to this Honourable House against the *Dutch*, alledging their Losses alone, immediately before the erecting of this Company, to amount unto 300000 *l. Sterling*, or thereabouts; for the prevention of which, this Company since their Trading there have constantly

2. The said late erected Company are of late very much sunk in their Credits amongst Merchants, Owners of Shipping and Tradesmen, to many of whom they are very much indebted for Freight of their Ships and Goods, And being often demanded to pay the same Debts, they have refused, and still do refuse to pay the same, declaring they have no effects in their hands to enable them so to do; and so by consequence their Trade following their Credit, they are, and needs must be very incapable to afford the said Colonies any suitable supply of *Negroes*, and also manage their Gold-Trade; Whereupon they have lately taken up an unknown way of granting their Licences to others of his Majesties good Subjects to fetch *Negroes* from *Guiny*, exacting for the same two, three, four and five Hundred pounds a Ship; which said Summes of Money some have been inforced to give, or sit still, and suffer their Plantations to come to ruine, which is the most intollerable Grievance and Oppression that ever was imposed upon his Majesties Subjects planting in these parts, and trading to the same.

3. They



sent out Ships of force to protect their Trade for *Blacks*; and whenever that care is neglected, that Trade will be lost; for the charge of its protection cannot be maintained by private Traders.

And the said Company farther say, That they have supplied the Plantations more plentifully and cheaper, and given as much credit or more for *Negroes*, then ever the private Traders did or could give, as will appear; by which means all the Plantations have flourished more then ever they did, until the late War broke out: So that it may reasonably be concluded, That if the *Negro* Trade should be separated from the Gold-Coast Trade, and so left open, it would certainly lose the Gold-Trade, which cannot bear its own expence, and prove a great prejudice to, if not the ruine of the *American* Plantations.

To the second the said Company say,

It's too true, That the Company is indebted to several persons, occasioned by their great losses; viz. There was taken from them at *Goree* by *de Ruyter* the value of 100000 *l. Sterling*, at *Cormentine* 60000 *l. Sterling*, at *Sereleon* 4000 *l. Sterling*, at *Syrinam* and *S. Christophers* 20000 *l. Sterling*. But these Losses could not have sunk the Companies Credit, had the Planters and Merchants, especially those of *Barbados*, complied with their obligations, who owe the Company 90000 *l. Sterling*, of which they of *Barbados* owe 60000 *l. Sterling*, which last debt is thrice as much as the Company owes to any besides their own Members. Yet the Company do not refuse to pay their debts, but pay interest to all their Creditors, and do discharge Principal and Interest as fast as their effects come in, which are coming daily. Nor have they only enough left to pay their debts, but likewise to carry on the Gold-Trade, and furnish the Plantations yearly with as many *Negroes* as they shall have occasion for, and that at moderate rates, hoping they will pay their old debts, and be more just and punctual in their payments in future.

But yet they acknowledge, because their Effects were abroad, they were forced rather then the Plantations should want a supply of *Negroes* for this time, to give Licenses to several persons to Trade to *Guiney*, and have taken of them towards the maintenance of Forts 3 *l. per Ton*, or 10 *per Cent.* on the *Cargo*, which is less then the Company pays in proportion upon their whole Trade; which is the course that hath been taken not only by the former *Guiney* Company, but by the *East-India* Company in their late united Stock: And the Company hath hitherto been so careful to supply the Plantations, that in the time of the great

3. They have contracted with the *Spaniards* to supply them yearly for a term of years with Thousands of *Negroes*, which the *Spaniard* imployes in planting the same Commodities in his Plantations, as are now planted in His Majesties Plantations; which Contract the said Company hitherto have not, and for the future must not faile to perform, although his Majesties Plantations remain totally unsupplied; whereby the *Spanish* Plantations and Commodities must of necessity flourish and rise, and his Majestie's moulder away, and come to nothing, Whereas the Free Adventurers for the *Negroes* Trade formerly never used to sell any *Negroes* to the *Spaniards* or other Foreigners whatsoever, but brought all to his Majesties Plantations, and thereby the same being plentifully and at indifferent rates supplied with *Negroes*, have risen to be so considerable a part of the Interest and care of the Crown of *England*, as they now are.

4. They have greatly opposed the Planters in putting an unreasonable Price upon the *Negroes*, which were brought upon the said Companies Accompt, for that formerly they were sold for 12, 14, and 16 pounds Sterling a Head, or 1600 *l.* and 1800 *l.* of Sugar, And now of late Five and twenty pounds a Head Sterling would have been given by his Majesties Subjects the Planters, when at the same time they sold to the *Spaniards* the Chief of their *Negroes* for Eighteen pounds Sterling a Head,



Contagion (when all people fled from the City) they did dispatch nine Ships to *Guiney* purposely to supply them with *Negroes*, and so have continued dispatching Ships successively all the time of the late War, so that there hath not been any want of *Negroes* in any of the Plantations.

To the third the said Company say,

It is true, That the Company understanding that the *Spaniards* were Treating with the *Dutch West-India* Company to furnish them yearly with a number of *Negroes*, for preventing of that Bargain to the *Hollanders* (which must inevitably have brought a great inconveniency upon the Plantations, by the competition with the *Hollanders* for the procuring of *Negroes*) and to bring a considerable return in ready money into this Kingdom, and hoping thereby in time to introduce a Trade into the *Spanish West-Indies*, did contract with them for the delivery of a certain number of *Negroes* yearly (though at a low rate, yet such as would have brought yearly into this Kingdom in pieces of Eight 100000 *l. Sterling*.) on purpose to keep the Trade from the *Dutch*: But they never delivered to the *Spaniards* more then 1200 *Negroes*, nor are they obliged to deliver them any more, because they have broken their Articles with the Company. And notwithstanding that Agreement, the Company furnished the Plantations with 6000 *Negroes* and upwards every year; which were more than they would buy of the Company, who were forced to keep many of them on their hands until they perished: And it seems very strange the Planters should complain of the Companies selling *Negroes* to the *Spaniards*, when as they themselves sold many of the *Negroes* they bought of the Companies Factors to the *Spaniards*; Nor do the *Spaniards*, as they alledge, imploy their *Negroes* to make the same Commodities as our Plantations do furnish: For it's well known they use them chiefly in their Silver-Mines, and Domestic-Service.

To the Fourth the said Company say,

The Company did supply very plentifully all the Plantations with *Negroes*; and that there might be no cause of Complaint, they informed themselves immediately after the sealing of the Patent how *Negroes* had been sold the four precedent years, and found that 17 *l. per Head* or 2400 pound of Sugar was the *medium* price, and they ordered their Factors to sell them to the Planters accordingly, and gave notice thereof

Head, intending thereby to compell the said Planters to a most unreasonable Compliance; By which means also none but the Refuse *Negroes* were left to be sold unto the *English* Planters, who refusing to buy the said Refuse most of them died upon the said Companies hands; And the said Planters have been of late so meanly supplied, that *Negroes* are now sold to them at the rate of Thirty pounds Sterling, or Five thousand pound of Sugar each *Negro*; This usage so discontented the Planters, that they resolved not to load upon the said Companies Ships, although the Freight was offered by them under half the value then given to other Ships, and the Grievances of the Planters in this particular in all probability might too much contribute to the too easie Surrender of *St. Christophers* and *Syrinam*.

5. The Affairs of the said late erected Company are managed and carried on in a way very grievous, for when any Disputes have arisen between them and their Masters, and Owners of Ships, or Seamen, &c. they will ever be their own Judges; They have unjustly, and without any good colour, seized and converted to their own uses here in *England* divers parcels of Merchants Goods without any legal proceedings, alledging that they will not be tryed by Juryes, &c. And if it happen that any Person whose Goods they have wrongfully seized seek his remedy by his Majesties known Laws of the Land, they presently threaten to cause the Matter to be brought before, and determined by his



to his Excellency the *L. Willoughby* Governor of the *Barbadoes*; &c. to be communicated to all the Plantations; Who did publish the same by Drum and Trumpets, and caused the Companies printed Declaration to be fixed in all publick places of the Island of *Barbadoes*, &c. Copies of both which Letters are hereunto annexed. And the Company say its utterly untrue, That the Planters would have given 25 *l.* for such *Negroes* as were sold the *Spaniards*, or that none but *Refuse Negroes* were left to be sold to the Planters; for that the Company alwayes did order them to be sold in Lotts according to the custome of the Countrey. It may be true, they have of late (by reason of the Accidents of the War) paid 30 *l.* for *Negroes*; and so we have in *London* given 6 *l.* per Chaldron for Coals, when before the War they were sold at 20 *s.* But it is utterly untrue, That the Planters for that pretended cause refused to load Goods on the Companies Ships; for they have constantly refused those advantagious offers of cheap Freight on the Companies Ships from the begining, even at that time when *Negroes* were sold them at 17 *l.* per Head. And it is a sufficient Evidence, that *Syrinam* and *St. Christophers* were very well supplied with *Negroes*, by the great Loss the Company had in each place; and also by Letters received from the Governor of *Syrinam*, who ownes, That the Credit they had from this Company had brought that Place to that good condition they were in before the *Dutch* possessed it.

To the fifth the said Company say,

There have never any differences arisen between the Company and any of their Masters and Owners of Ships, or Seamen, which have not been amicably ended in the same manner as the *East-India Company* determined matters of that nature: And as to that charge, That the Company have unjustly, and without any good colour, seised and converted divers parcels of Merchants Goods to their own use, the Company say, That they never did use any such unjust practice; but they acknowledge, That the Petitioner *Skutt* having let a Ship to this Company for a Voyage to *Guiney*, and by *Charter-party* covenanting to carry no other but the Companies Goods therein, the Company upon search made in the said Ship found a parcel of Goods which were none of theirs, nor licenced by them to be carried, and thereupon they ordered them to be taken out of the said Ship, and carried into the Companies Warehouse; and afterwards one *John Kirckham*, who it seems was Partner with the said *Skutt*, brought his Suite in the Exchequer against some of the Servants employed

his Majesty and Council; and accordingly have done it, to the end they might over-awe all Persons at their own will and pleasure, and affright them from endeavouring to seek after the usual, plain and appointed way of Legal proceedings for the redress of the Wrongs they receive from them,

6. The *Dutch West-India Company* had formerly a farre greater Trade to *Guiney* than the *English*; but for many years past, before the constitution of this Company, and whilst the Trade for Gold was in the management of the Worthy the *East-India Company*, and an open free Trade for *Negroes* allowed to all Adventurers, the said *Dutch* Trade did yearly so apparently decay, that One hundred pound Sterling of their Original and Principal Stock was not worth Ten pounds Sterling, Whereas since the said late erected Company have taken place, each One hundred pounds Sterling of the *Dutch* is now become worth near Sixty pounds Sterling, And the Concerns of the *English* go as much to wrack, and will undoubtedly in a few years, as also his Majesties said Colonies in *America*, unless seasonably prevented, be brought to nought.

7. If it shall be objected, That this Company doth not participate of a Monopoly, because their Books were laid open for all men to subscribe that would? It is answered, That their Books indeed were for some time laid open, But not till upon good grounds it was generally  
believed



employed by this Company; and thereupon (true it is) that the Company did humbly represent the truth of the matter before the King and Council, praying their direction therein, conceiving if a practice of this nature should be admitted, it would be destructive to the Charter: But the King and Council made no Order therein; and afterwards the said *Kirkham* did agree to refer the matter to two of this Company, yet to this day has not made any application to have the same determined; and the Company now are and ever were ready to appear and answer any Suit he or any other shall commence against them at Law; And they say, that is absolutely false, that the Company ever said they would not be tried by Jury; which imputation being so scandalous and false, the Company hopes this Honourable House will give them reparations against the Petitioners.

To the sixth the said Company say,

It's wholly untrue what they alledge; for it is notorious that from the time of the forming of this Company, to the time of *de Ruyters* taking their Ships at *Goree*, the *Hollands West-India* Stock declined from 14 to 10 *per Cent.* and was never since valued at above 18 *per Cent.* at highest, which advance proceeded from their Capture of this Companies Estate, and not from the mal-administration of the Trade; for without reflection upon the *East-India* Company, they affirm, (and let their Books and this Companies be Judges) That this Company sent out more Goods in one year to that Coast, than the *East-India* Company did in all those five years in which they had the Trade: And which is yet more, for every shillings-worth of *English* Manufacture which that Company exported for that Trade, this Company sent a pounds-worth, and that of Manufactures of the same Species, which this Company procured to be made here, and the *East-India* Company bought from *Holland*: So as it appears, That neither the *Hollanders* Trade or Stock is so much increased, nor ours decreased, as the Petitioners most mistakingly alledge; nor can this Company be affected with any thing but what befel them by the War, which was their misfortune, and not their crime.

To the seventh the said Company say,

The Companies Books were open when the Charter was first granted and made publick, as by the several Printed Declarations hereunto annexed doth appear, which were fixed in all parts of *England*, and in all

believed that the most part of their Stocks was consumed, And they had run themselves upon so many other great Inconveniencies, That no prudent Merchant, who onely aimed at a Profit upon the Stock, without seeking after indirect Advantages from the Company in other by-ways, would engage amongst them.

*Paul Painter.      Ferdinando Gorges.*  
*Henry Batson.    Benjamin Skutt.*  
*Thomas Knights.*



the *American* Plantations : And no disparagement to the Petitioners, as prudent and honest men as themselves did subscribe without any of those indirect and by-aims as they pretend, as this Honourable House will perceive when they peruse the list of the Adventurers names hereunto annexed ; and we doubt not but they will likewise give reparations to so many worthy persons as by this Article are scandalously abused ; Especially when it shall be considered,

First, That the Stock which preceded this present Stock was never more than 17400. *l.* and though the most part of that were laid out in erecting two Forts, and settling Garrisons to secure the whole Trade of the River of *Gambia* ; yet no man that knows any thing of the importance of that River, would think that a consumption of the Stock, but a most prudent imployment of it, from whence a plentiful harvest of profit was rationally to be expected, and hath been, and may yet more abundantly be reaped ; and therefore the Merchants who engaged in the new Subscription were not so imprudent as the Petitioners report them.

Secondly, That those Merchants who engaged in this present Additional Stock, were not men that aimed at indirect Advantages by it ; for *de facto* it will appear by the Books, that those who had the administration of it, did so faithfully and industriously manage the Trade, and so far engaged their own personal Credits for the Common Interest, that before 80000 *l.* of the subscribed Stock was paid in, they had sent out to the value of 150000 *l.* and by a clear ballance of the Books had gained 80000 *l.*

From all which this Company doth humbly presume to hope that the Wisdom of Parliament will discover :

That this Trade incorporated to this Company is in its Constitution National.

That without Forts and force by Land and Sea, it cannot be secured to this Kingdom.

That without the Royal Authority, and a Joynt Stock, those Forts and Forces cannot be supported.

That the whole Charge cannot be born, but by the United Advantage of the Trade of the whole Coast of *Africa*.

And upon the whole, that these Petitioners Allegations will resolve into this, That they being possessed of a sufficient part of our Stock on which to manage the Trade of *Blacks* themselves, they would have the Authority of this House to follow it for their own Accounts, as they have had the advantage of the dilatory proceedings of the Courts of *Bar-*

*badoes*, to detain the Companie's Estate from them, wherein the Planters (our Debtors) are Judges.

One thing the said Company must needs adde, That they believe a Correspondence must needs have been between these Complainers and the *Dutch*; for before we knew any thing of their Design, or before they had presented their Petition to this Honourable House, they had taken care to make the *Dutch* rejoyce at the Ruine of the *Royal Company*, which is expressed in the *Harlem Gazett* of the 30th. of *October*. So that we have too much cause to suspect they are under-hand set on by the *Dutch West-India Company*, who doubtless would purchase the Dissolution of this Company with a greater Summe of Money than ever was subscribed to support it,

By Order of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading  
into Africa.

ELLIS LEIGHTON, Secret.



